

VZCZCXRO2861  
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHVJ #2519/01 3251855  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 211855Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7405  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUFOAOA/USNIC SARAJEVO BK PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 002519

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EUR FOR DICARLO, EUR/SCE (HOH, FOOKS, STINCHCOMB), INL FOR  
KIMMEL; NSC FOR BRAUN; OSD FOR BEIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/19/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA - MEDIA REPORT U.S. PLANS TO REMOVE DODIK  
BY LINKING HIM TO CORRUPTION

REF: SARAJEVO 2316

Classified By: Ambassador Charles English for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The week of November 12, Bosnian media outlets reported that the U.S. hatched a plan to enable High Representative Lajcak to remove Republika Srpska (RS) Prime Minister Milorad Dodik by exposing his links to corruption and criminal activities. The story, which first surfaced on two Mostar-based portals, was picked up by media outlets nation-wide, particularly RS-based media, and by print media based in Zagreb and Belgrade. Although groundless, RS coverage of the story highlighted the tendency of the RS media to present Bosnian Serbs and RS leaders as victims of an international conspiracy. Dodik reacted by claiming that the allegations were a response to his opposition to the High Representative's October 19 measures. He contrasted his "democratic opposition" to OHR with the alleged plotting of the international community. We suspect that the story's origins lie in plans by OHR to boost its anti-corruption capacities. In that sense, there is a grain of truth to it, since the new Analysis Cell will examine links between high-level politicians and organized crime, corruption, terrorism and war criminal support networks. END SUMMARY

THE U.S. AGAINST DODIK  
-----

12. (U) The media in Bosnia published stories last week about alleged U.S. attempts, led by Ambassador English, to engineer OHR's removal of RS PM Dodik by exposing his links to criminal activities. On November 14, a Mostar-based portal claimed that the U.S. aim was to remove a principle source of political instability in Bosnia. The article also asserted that the U.S. wanted to split Dodik's Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) by persuading more "moderate" voices within the party, particularly Serb member of the Tri-Presidency Nejbosa Radmanovic and PM Nikola Spiric (who resigned but is still in office), to abandon Dodik's confrontational tactics over the HighRep's October 19 measures. Another web portal in Mostar, describing the U.S. plan as &political liquidation,8 claimed that RS voters would more readily accept Dodik's removal on corruption grounds than for purely political reasons. The Embassy issued a statement denying the reports.

13. (U) Despite our denial, print media from Bosnia and the region gave prominent coverage to the story the following

day. RS Press, a popular tabloid Belgrade-based daily featured the story as its headline and carried statements by SNSD Secretary General Rajko Vasic labeling the alleged U.S. plan "a special media war" against the RS. Vasic went on to say that the U.S. claim Dodik was corrupt would, like 2002 claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, be proven false. The paper also published comments by an RS government official who insisted that the U.S. is targeting Dodik because he can not be defeated through "democratic means." The daily San carried Dodik's assertion that he is being targeted because he is acting on Serbs, fears of outvoting. Zagreb-based Vecernji List added a new twist to the story with its claim that the U.S. had given Haris Silajdzic an ultimatum during his recent trip to the U.S.: cooperate fully or be removed. Oslobodenje, Sarajevo's oldest daily, and Fokus, a pro-RS government daily, also ran the story.

Comment  
-----

14. (C) We suspect that the story is loosely based on OHR plans to reestablish a smaller version of its former Anti-Crime and Corruption Unit (ACCU), which will be known as the Analysis Cell. The Cell's aim will be to identify financial and other linkages between criminal, terrorist and war criminal support networks and high-level politicians involved in anti-Dayton activity. The Cell will work with existing Bosnian institutions, particularly the State Court and SIPA, but will not be involved in prosecutions itself (unlike the former ACCU). RS coverage of the story highlights the RS media's increasing tendency to portray Serbs as victims and as under the constant attack from the

SARAJEVO 00002519 002 OF 002

international community, in this case the U.S. (Reftel). Dodik was quick to take advantage of this sentiment within the RS, arguing that allegations of corruption against him were being manufactured because of his opposition to the HighRep's October 19 measures.  
ENGLISH